

August Kubizek

August Friedrich Kubizek (3 August 1888 – 23 October 1956) was an Austrian musical conductor best known for being a close friend of Adolf Hitler, when both were in their late teens. He later wrote about their friendship in his book *The Young Hitler I Knew* (1955).



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Early life

August was the first born and only surviving child of Michael and Maria Kubizek. His sisters Maria, Therese and Karoline died in early childhood.

Kubizek and Hitler first met while competing for standing room in the Landestheater in Linz, Austria. Because of their shared passion for the operas of Richard Wagner, they quickly became close friends and later roommates in Vienna while both sought admission into college. The two shared a small room in Stumpergasse 31/2 door 17 in the sixth district of Vienna from 22 February to early July 1908.

As the only son of a self-employed upholsterer, Kubizek was expected to someday take over his father's business, but he secretly harboured dreams of becoming a conductor. With Hitler's encouragement, he devoted more and more of his time to this passion, completing all the musical training available to him in Linz. However, to achieve his goal of being an orchestral conductor, he would require higher education in music which was offered only in Vienna.

It was an 18-year-old Hitler who successfully persuaded Kubizek's father to let his son go to the metropolis to attend the conservatory.

He was immediately accepted into the Vienna Conservatory where he quickly made a name for himself. Hitler, however, was twice denied entrance into Vienna's art academy, a fact which he kept hidden from his friend for some time. In 1908, Hitler abruptly broke off the friendship and drifted into homelessness. Kubizek completed his studies in 1912 and was hired as conductor of the orchestra in Marburg on the Drau, Austria (Maribor, in Slovenia, after 1918). He was later offered a position at the Stadttheater in Klagenfurt, but this job and his musical career were cut short by the beginning of World War I. Before leaving for the front, he married Anna Funke (7 October 1887 – 4 October 1976), a violinist from Vienna with whom he had three sons: Augustin, Karl Maria and Rudolf.

From August 1914 until November 1918, Kubizek served as a reservist in Regiment 2 of the Austro-Hungarian Infantry.

Later contact with Hitler

After seeing Hitler on the front page of the *Münchener Illustrierte* (circa 1920), Kubizek followed his friend's career with some interest, although he did not attempt to contact him until 1933 when he wrote to congratulate him on having become Chancellor of Germany. In August of that year, Kubizek received an unexpected reply from Hitler, who wrote to his old friend "Gustl" saying, "I should be very glad... to revive once more with you those memories of the best years of my life." Thirty years after Hitler had broken off contact with Kubizek, the two friends were reunited on 9 April 1938 during one of Hitler's visits to Linz. The two spoke at the Hotel Weinzinger and Hitler offered Kubizek the conductorship of an orchestra, which Kubizek politely refused. Hitler later invited Kubizek to attend the Bayreuth festival as his guest in 1939 and again in 1940.

In 1938, Kubizek was hired by the National Socialists to write two short booklets called *Reminiscences* about his youth with Hitler.

Kubizek saw Hitler for the last time on 23 July 1940; although as late as 1944, Hitler sent Kubizek's mother a food basket for her 80th birthday. When the tide began to turn against Hitler, Kubizek, who had avoided politics all his life, became a member of the NSDAP in 1942 as a gesture of loyalty to his friend.

After the war

In December 1945, Kubizek gathered the collection of keepsakes given to him by Hitler during their youth and concealed them carefully in the basement of his house in Eferding. He was arrested by American forces shortly afterwards and held at Glasenbach, where he was imprisoned and interrogated by the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command. His home was searched, but the Hitler correspondence and drawings were not found. He was released on 8 April 1947.

"Adolf Hitler, mein Jugendfreund" (eng. The young Hitler I knew) caused a stir when it was released in 1953 and was later translated into several languages.

Works

- *Adolf Hitler, mein Jugendfreund* (1953)
- *The Young Hitler I Knew* (1955)

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